handicapped. The number of beneficiaries covered by the organisation during 1996-97 was 164 and during 1997-98, 127. The other organisation is running a Day Care Centre for 50 old persons and also serving 800 old persons under Mobile Medicare Unit.

(c) to (e) Ministry encourages greater involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations in the implementation of its schemes and programmes in the States/UTs, including Himachal Pradesh. The steps taken in this regard include—

(i) Holding meetings with official of State Government/U.T. Admns. non-officials of standing, representatives of voluntary organisationss and NGO forums to explain the schemes/programmes.

(ii) State Governments/UT Administrations are persuaded to sponsor larger number of proposals from NGOs.

Besides the above, the Ministry have reviewed the various schemes/ programmes to bring about the much needed flexibility, open-ness and simplification of norms and procedures.

Stripping of ST Women Surpanch in Rajasthan

1630. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention had been drawn to the news item in the 'Hindustan Times', dated August 19, 1998, captioned 'women stripped for unfurling National Flag' to the effect that a women Surpanch who unfurled the National flag in village Thikuri in Dausa district to the Scheduled Tribes; and

(b) if so, the effective steps taken by Govenment to ensure due security for women belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe especially the elected representatives and to protect their dignity as guaranted under the Constitution of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MENKA GANDHI): (a) Yes Sir, Government of Rajasthan has reported that a case No. 311/98 has been registered in Police Station Manpur, district Dausa under Section 147, 323, 504, 452 IPC on 15.8.1998. Accused persons were arrested and Chargesheet in respect of this case has been filed in the court on 31.8.98.

(b) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 provides for punishment if a non scheduled caste or a non scheduled tribe persons uses force to any woman with intent to dishonour her modesty. Government of India has been impressing upon the State Governments to accord higher priority for cases relating to vulnerable section of society. Focussed attention is provided on such cases.

In the instant case of 15.8.98, Chargesheet has been filed in the Court within a fortnight of the day of incident and Smt. Mishri Devi (victim), W/o Shri Bhonrilal has been provided full security by the State Government.

Children Engaged in Begging

1631. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the enormous number of child-work force engaged in begging, not only to support themselves and their family, but also those employed for organised gangs;

(b) if so, Government's assessment about the total population of child labour engaged in begging; and

(c) the steps teken/being taken to effectively check and prohibit employment of children in begging?